

A New Agenda for Immigration and Citizenship Policy Research

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Comparative Political Studies

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Abstract

Given the widespread interest in political solutions to the current problems associated with immigration, we need to have an accurate understanding of existing policies in a cross-national perspective. To explain the coming into being and effectiveness of these policies, researchers have recently started to quantify immigration and citizenship policies and built databases across time and a large number of countries. These indices are likely to reconnect political science research with a field from which it has long been disconnected in terms of theories and methodology—the sub-field of migration and citizenship research. This special issue brings together scholars from North America and Europe who have been at the forefront of index-building and have started to employ these indices in empirical research.

Keywords

migration, policy indices, citizenship

In political science, research on migration and citizenship has become a relevant topic only recently, especially when compared with sociology, history, or

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economics (Hollifield & Wong, 2013, p. 4). Some 10 years ago, Gary Freeman (2005) still gloomily argued that the immigration literature has a tendency “to be a-theoretical and descriptive, to consist of ad hoc case studies that are difficult to aggregate, and to display a strong normative content with a tendency toward advocacy and celebration rather than rigorous analysis” (p. 117). Freeman called for better data and suggested that the sub-field of migration research should reconnect with general political science by applying “to their subject theoretical frameworks already well-established in the discipline’s work on other subjects” (Freeman, 2005, p. 112). Such political science theories might include, he suggested, a political economy theory of interests, a theory of liberalism and rights for immigrants, or a theory of institutionalism focusing on the institutional configurations of states (Freeman, 2005).

The contributions in this special issue address these shortcomings and are representative of a new generation of studies in migration research that analyze a larger number of cases, both in terms of the number of individuals and the number of countries studied.¹ This is possible because today there are a number of data sets that contain cross-national data on individual migrants; these data sets focus, for example, on their integration into receiving societies.² The same is true for the policy level. This symposium documents the richness of recently developed indicators that measure and compare immigration regulations for different groups of immigrants across space (and time) as well as indicators that capture cross-national (and longitudinal) differences in citizenship and integration policies for immigrants. By using these indicators, current studies can gain leverage in making causal inferences—for example, in terms of the causes and effects of policies—and they can deliver better descriptions of how countries differ across space and time.

The contributions to this special issue argue that relatively wealthy autocracies have an interest in being open or closed to low-skilled immigration depending on whether they are rentier states or not (Shin, 13 countries); they also study the interaction between dual-citizenship-allowing-regimes in sending and receiving countries and the effects on migration flows (Alarian & Wallace Goodman, 14 receiving and more than 100 sending states) as well as the gains that migrant-sending countries allowing for dual citizenship can expect in terms of remittances and return migration (Leblang, six receiving and 114 sending states). Two other contributions focus on integration and citizenship policies and study the effect of political multiculturalism on the individual acceptance of Muslim accommodation among native-born majority members (Wright, Johnston, Citrin, & Soroka, two receiving countries) and explain why countries restrict or liberalize the rights they grant to immigrants (Koopmans & Michalowski, 44 countries).

By introducing the databases that the authors in this special issue use in a little more detail and by placing them in the larger context of other existing indices of immigration and citizenship policies, we hope to attract a larger political science audience to issues of immigration. We also expect political scientists to become increasingly interested in issues of immigration control and citizenship rights for immigrants because of the all-time high numbers of refugees, the many political conflicts that revolve around the coordination of this crisis, and its strong impact on national political systems.

Immigration and Citizenship Research in Political Science Journals

This increasing interest also becomes apparent when we look at how migration topics are represented in general political science journals. In the field of international relations, Gurowitz (1999, p. 413) noticed that scholars only started to work more intensely on immigration and immigrants at the end of the 1990s. She reports that two journals, *International Organization* and *World Politics*, published only two articles on these topics between 1980 and 1995 but four between 1995 and 1998. Hollifield and Wong (2013, pp. 7-8) observed an upward trend over time in some of the major political science journals in the United States and Europe, such as the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, the *European Journal of Political Research*, and the *Journal of Politics*. In the year 2000, across all five journals, they found only two articles on migration or citizenship issues. Similarly, Freeman (2005, p. 113) confirms that the *American Political Science Review* published only two articles in this field between 1981 and 2003.

For the year 2012, however, Hollifield and Wong (2013, pp. 7-8) already counted eight articles published in the five political science journals they reviewed. When we conducted our own search of the online issues of *Comparative Political Studies* (CPS) since 2000 using the same keywords as Hollifield and Wong (2013),³ we found that CPS has a strong record in the field of migration and citizenship (28 articles between 2000 and 2012 compared with 61 articles published across the five journals examined by Hollifield and Wong). With the exception of 2011—a year in which CPS published nine papers in this field—CPS constantly published between one and three articles per year between 2000 and 2012.⁴ Also, since 2013 we counted 17 articles, including the contributions that make up this special issue.

In their overview, Hollifield and Wong (2013) observed that among the few articles that have been published in the field of migration and citizenship, the large majority focuses on attitudes, behavior, and incorporation. In the papers

published by CPS we observed a similar pattern—only a few publications focus on policies. Wright (2011) and Goodman (2015) already use and discuss the use of some of the indicators included in this volume, but a few slightly older, comparative analyzes explicitly deal with immigration and citizenship policy: for example, in their article, Virginie Guiraudon and Gallya Lahav (2000) contribute to debates on whether international norms have constrained national policy making through a qualitative analysis of how norms of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) have been incorporated by national jurisdictions and administrations overseeing migration control in France, Germany, and the Netherlands (Guiraudon & Lahav, 2000, p. 171). Antje Ellermann (2005) explains differences in the implementation of immigrant deportations across two German and two U.S. states by showing that decision making at the local level is more prone to lobbying by pro-immigrant rights groups than deportation decisions taken at a higher administrative level. With the help of today's indices, both research questions could be applied to a larger set of countries.

Focusing on individual attitudes, Stephen Shulman's (2002) study contradicts the idea that civic nationalism is dominant in Western Europe and North America and ethnic nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. Shulman himself notes that the views of the masses he measured in his study may differ from elite views. Indicators available today could yet be another measure of nationalism and broaden the scope of his argument to the dimension of national citizenship regimes. For his part, Christian Joppke (2001) retraces developments in "aliens' rights" and citizenship regulations in Germany, the United States, and on the European Union level, arguing that the "sources of rights expansion for immigrants are mostly legal and domestic" (Joppke, 2001, p. 340). A recent study seeking to test this argument by using Lijphart's (1999) index of the strength of judicial review as a predictor for the liberal or restrictive character of the citizenship rights granted to immigrants (as measured by the Index of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants (ICRI) data set) could not find support for this argument (Koopmans, Michalowski, & Waibel, 2012).

In sum, this short and certainly by no means exhaustive review of the political science literature on migration and citizenship suggests that these questions have not been the only largely absent element in political science debates. One of the core aspects of political science, namely how to regulate migration and citizenship, has been even more neglected. We believe that this phenomenon can partly be explained by the fact that for a long time, there was no available data to study migration and citizenship policies in a more systematic way. Yet as already mentioned above, over the last 10 years researchers have started to build policy databases that allow large-N and across time comparisons (for an overview, see Helbling, 2016). The citizenship and migration field has thus followed other fields in political science

such as those studying democracy (Coppedge et al., 2011; Munck & Verkuilen, 2002), the state–church relationship (Chaves & Cann, 1992; Fox, 2008; Grim & Finke, 2006), rule of law regulations (Skaaning, 2010), and electoral systems (Teorell & Lindstedt, 2010), where similar developments toward index-building have taken place.

New Immigration and Citizenship Policy Data Sets

Helbling (2016, p. 29) counts four databases that focus exclusively on citizenship regulations, five that combine citizenship and integration, and 14 that measure immigration policies. With two exceptions they were all built between the mid-2000s and the mid-2010s. Many of these databases have been developed for individual projects and have therefore been put together with very specific research questions in mind. This is most apparent in the immigration policy field, where data sets are not even accessible for other researchers (Bjerre, Helbling, Römer, & Zobel, 2015).

For a while there were almost as many data sets as large-N studies in this field, because researchers did not use existing data sets but preferred to collect their own data (Bauböck & Helbling, 2011). The sudden rush to quantify citizenship and immigration policy indices entailed that crucial conceptual and methodological questions were largely neglected. It was hardly ever discussed what these indices exactly measure, what the differences between these indices are, and why they have been constructed the way they have been constructed. Debates on these questions only started a few years ago (e.g., Bauböck & Helbling, 2011; Bjerre et al., 2015; Goodman, 2015; Helbling, 2013; Michalowski & van Oers, 2012; Vink & Helbling, 2013).

In both the citizenship and migration policy fields, there are new and larger data sets that are currently being made available or updated; these data sets aim at overcoming some of the conceptual and methodological shortcomings that we have faced so far (Helbling, 2016, p. 31). The EUDO CITIZENSHIP Observatory at the European University Institute has recently released the CITLAW database (EUDO Citizenship Law Indicators), which focuses on citizenship policies and covers 42 European states for the year 2011 (Jeffers, Honohan, & Bauböck, 2012; Vink & Bauböck, 2013). The indicators measure substantive and procedural requirements for various modes of citizenship acquisition or loss.⁵ The related EUDO CITIZENSHIP Global Databases on Modes of Loss and Acquisition of Citizenship includes information on 42 European states and 35 states in the Americas and the Caribbean for the period 2013 to 2016. It is planned to update this database annually.⁶ Koopmans et al. (2012) have built the Index of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants (ICRI), which consists of two sub-indices measuring the

restrictiveness of nationality acquisition (or individual equality) and cultural rights attribution (or cultural difference) respectively. The data set includes 10 Western European countries and four time periods (1980, 1990, 2002, 2008). Recently, this data set has been expanded to include 29 countries from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, East Asia, Oceania, and the Americas (see Koopmans & Michalowski, 2016).⁷

In the field of migration policies, the Determinants of International Migration (DEMIG) project has created a policy database that covers policy changes in 45 countries for the time period 1946 to 2013 (De Haas, Natter, & Vezzoli, 2015).⁸ The various measures provide information on the policy area and migrant group targeted, as well as the change in restrictiveness they introduce in the existing legal system. The Immigration Policies in Comparison (IMPIC) database covers regulations in 33 OECD countries for the time period 1980 to 2010 and for four sub-fields: labor migration, family reunification, asylum and refugees, and co-ethnics (Helbling, Bjerre, Römer, & Zobel, 2016).⁹ Moreover, it is possible to distinguish regulations from control mechanisms and external and internal regulations as well as to differentiate between conditions, eligibility criteria, security of status, and migrant rights. Unlike the DEMIG Policy Database, the IMPIC project provides information on the absolute levels of policy restrictiveness, which allows researchers to conduct not only within- but also between-country comparisons.

Causes and Effects of Immigration and Citizenship Policies

This special issue illustrates how indices help us investigate the causes and effects of migration and citizenship policies and thus ask more general political science questions: What are the main factors explaining variation across time and countries? Do right-wing parties have an effect on the restrictiveness of policies? What are the effects of policies? Are nation-states able to control migration flows? Do policies have an effect on how citizens think about immigrants? These questions show that a new research agenda has emerged, that is at the heart of comparative political science: it involves looking at policy effectiveness and political factors driving policy change.

So far, questions of causes and effects of citizenship and even more so of migration policies have hardly been asked. A limited number of studies has aimed at explaining the variation of policies across countries and time, the effects of integration and citizenship policies on migrant integration, and the effects of immigration policies on immigration rates (Helbling, 2016, pp. 34-37). In both the citizenship and migration fields, there are two studies that investigate why certain countries adopt more restrictive regulations

than others. Both Howard (2009) and Koopmans et al. (2012) look at short- and long-term factors to explain levels of citizenship rights or the changes in these rights. While Howard (2009) shows that countries that had a long colonial history and/or democratized early developed a civic national identity tied to liberal values, Koopmans et al. (2012) reveal path dependency effects and show that the policies at the end of the 2000s are best explained by the situation in 1980. Both also show that pressure from the far right plays an important role.

For the immigration policy field, Timmer and Williams (1998) find that income distribution and economic threat perception lead to more restrictive policies. In the study by Givens and Luedtke (2005), it appears that political parties have an effect on integration measures, but not on control mechanisms that regulate the inflow of new immigrants. Moreover, issue salience as measured by media coverage leads to more restrictive policies.

Regarding the effects of citizenship policies, the findings to date are rather mixed. Fleischmann and Dronkers (2010) show that the risks of unemployment among immigrants are not affected by integration policies. In the study by Ramos, Matano, and Nieto (2013), it appears that immigrant–native wage gaps are smaller in countries with more generous policies. Dinesen and Hooghe (2010) observe that inclusionary integration policies do not lead to higher trust levels among immigrants. Helbling, Reeskens, Stark, Stolle, and Wright (2016) show that the lowest political and social engagement gaps between natives and immigrants exist in countries with the most comprehensive and immigrant-friendly integration policies. Goodman and Wright (2015) more specifically look at the effects of mandatory integration policies and find little evidence that these requirements matter for socio-economic integration. However, like Helbling, Reeskens, et al. (2016), they show that political integration is influenced by civic integration measures.

While many studies did not find any effects or only found small effects of integration policies, others argue that these measures promote exclusion rather than integration (for an overview of the effect of multicultural policies see Koopmans, 2013). Koopmans (2010) comes to the conclusion that migrants integrate better in states with more assimilationist policies. He argues that immigrants are forced to leave their ethnic groups and to “acquire the linguistic and cultural skills that are necessary to earn a living” in the absence of a social safety net (Koopmans, 2010, p. 21).

What about the effects of migration policies? Scholars are still debating to what extent more restrictive/liberal regulations lead to lower/higher migration rates (Castles, 2004; Sassen, 1996). Empirical research however shows that there are policy effects. Mayda (2004) shows that positive migration pull factors become more important in countries with less restrictive policies. Brücker and

Schröder (2011) find that more skill-selective policies lead to higher admittance rates. Ortega and Peri (2013) come to the conclusion that immigration flows are reduced in countries with more restrictive policies. Massey et al. (2016), however, have recently argued that border enforcement on the U.S. southern border has transformed a circular flow of unauthorized migrants into a large permanent settlement of families. The study by Fitzgerald, Leblang, and Teets (2014) shows that generous migration policies (and also generous citizenship regimes) lead to larger dyadic migration inflows. Hatton (2004) finds that policies do indeed have an impact on asylum flows but a smaller one than economic factors.

Contributions in the current special issue also address causes and effects of immigration and citizenship policies. Adrian Shin studies why migration policy regimes in autocracies may be open or close to low-skilled immigrants while Koopmans and Michalowski look at trajectories of nationhood as causal factors for current cross-national differences in citizenship regimes. The three other papers study outcomes of citizenship policies. Wright et al. look at how multicultural policies affect public opinion on Muslim accommodation whereas both Leblang as well as Alarian and Wallace Goodman study effects of dual citizenship policies in different contexts. Leblang argues that migrant-sending countries “use dual citizenship to access a steady stream of international capital, namely remittances and return migration.” In a similar vein, Alarian and Wallace Goodman argue that states can use domestic dual citizenship policies strategically to influence global migration flows.

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Notes

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2. For example, the European Social Survey (ESS), TIES—Integration of the European Second Generation, EURISLAM, Six Country Immigration Integration Survey (SCIICS), the International Social Science Program (ISSP).
3. We searched the following keywords in the abstracts: “migration,” “migrant,” “immigration,” “immigrant,” “emigration,” “emigrant,” “citizenship,” “refugee,”

- and “asylum.” Of all articles we found and included in our sample, some treat these issues only at the margin, and there are six articles that study right-wing populist parties—a topic that is partly related to migration issues.
4. It also needs to be taken into account that the number of issues and articles increased by around a third between 2000 and 2012.
 5. See here: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/indicators/eudo-citizenship-law-indicators>
 6. See here: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/databases>
 7. See here: <https://icri.wzb.eu/>
 8. See here: <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/data/demig-data/demig-policy-1>
 9. See here: <http://www.impic-project.eu/>

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